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ABSTRACT

Utilizing responses (a self administered, 15 item questionnaire) of a rural northeastern New England sample of junior high, senior high, and college students, correlation between legal and illegal drug use and perceived self-alienation was examined. Comparison was also made between users and nonusers. Legal users were defined as those who made at least "light" use of 1 legal drug or infrequent use of 2 legal drugs (beer, wine, and liquor). Illegal drug users were defined as those who made moderate use of 1 drug or light to excessive use of more than 1 drug (lysergic acid diethylamide, marijuana, hashish, barbituates, heroin, glue, cocaine, mescaline, and amphetamines). Nonusers included both individuals who had "never used" and "used to use" drugs. The drug user was found to perceive himself as being no more, and in some instances slightly less self-alienated than the nonuser. Significant negative correlations were found to exist between current specific illegal drug usage and self-alienation for 2 out of 9 specific illegal drugs. A significant positive correlation existed between self-alienation and the consumption of 1 illegal drug. None of the significant correlations between self-alienation and drug consumption were high. (JC)

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STUDENT DRUG USAGE AND SELF-ALIENATION

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Abstract

In this study of drug usage in a specific section of rural small town New England (junior, senior high school and college students) the drug user was found to perceive himself as being no more, and in some instances slightly less self-alienated than the nonuser. Significant negative correlations were found to exist between current specific illegal drug usage and self-alienation for two out of nine specific illegal drugs. A significant positive correlation existed between self-alienation and the consumption of one illegal drug. None of the significant correlations between self-alienation and drug consumption were high. It, therefore, cannot simply be assumed, at least as far as rural-small town youth are concerned, that self-alienation and drug consumption are positively related.

STUDENT DRUG USAGE AND SELF-ALIENATION

Michael L. Fischler

A recently completed research study (Fischler, 1974) suggests that describing the "typical American drug user" as self-alienated may be about as accurate as describing the "typical American Indian" as savage or the "typical American female" as docile.

The study, completed by the author, utilizing a sample of junior high, senior high, and college students in a specific section of northeastern, small town New England, demonstrated that both legal and illegal drug users generally perceived themselves as being no more, and in some instances significantly less self-alienated than nonusers. Significant negative correlations were found to exist between generalized illegal drug usage,[1] legal drug usage,[2] and perceived self-alienation.[3]

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[1] To have been considered a generalized illegal drug user, the individual must have exhibited either moderate usage of one drug, or light to excessive usage of more than one drug. The following drugs were designated "illegal drugs": LSD, Hashish, Marijuana, Barbiturates, Heroin, Amphetamines, Glue, Cocaine, and Mescaline. The system was designed to contrast the multiple, or moderate to excessive illegal drug user with the infrequent or non-drug user.

[2] To have been considered a generalized "legal drug user," the individual must have exhibited at least light usage of one legal drug or infrequent usage of two legal drugs. The following drugs were designated "legal drugs": Beer, Wine, and Liquor. This system was designed to contrast the nonuser, or infrequent user of one legal drug with the light to heavy user of one or more legal drugs.

[3] Self-alienation scores reflect the individual's average response to fifteen statements (see item number 1) found in the Appendix.

Results (utilizing a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) are summarized in Table I.

Table I

Self-Alienation Versus Legal and Illegal Drug Consumption

Type of drugs consumed	Test Results df	r
Illegal drugs	621	0.173**
Alcohol	621	0.100*

** Significant at the .01 level.

* Significant at the .05 level.

The following two tables (Tables II and III) compare perceived self-alienation with the average consumption of legal and illegal drugs.

TABLE II

PERCEIVED SELF-ALIENATION VERSUS ILLEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION

Usage Levels of Self-alienation+	No	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-10 times	11-20 times	21-50 times	Over 50 times
2 Most	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	17	5	1	0	0	0	0
5	67	17	7	1	2	0	0
6	125	37	16	3	0	0	0
7	157	65	22	15	3	0	0
8 Least	24	14	8	3	2	0	0

+ The lower the average score, the greater the degree of self-alienation.

9000

TABLE III

PERCEIVED SELF-ALIENATION VERSUS LEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION

Usage / Levels of Self-alienation+	No	2-3 times a year	1-2 times a month	1-2 times a week	More than twice a week	1-2 times a day	More than twice a day
2 Most	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	2	3	1	0	0	0
4	8	5	7	2	1	0	0
5	24	39	16	14	1	0	0
6	44	53	67	14	3	0	0
7	57	76	74	44	10	0	1
8 Least	9	20	15	5	2	0	0

+The lower the average score, the greater the degree of self-alienation.

(TABLE II) All of the individuals indicating extremely high perceived self-alienation (scores of from 2-3) indicated nonusage of illegal drugs. Of the individuals indicating moderate self-alienation (scores of from 4-5), 71.7% were nonusers of illegal drugs while 27.3% indicated that they were illegal drug users. Of the individuals indicating "less" self-alienation (scores of from 6-7), 63.6% were nonusers of illegal drugs, while 36.3% were illegal drug users. Of the individuals indicating the least amount of perceived self-alienation (a score of 8), 47.0% were nonusers, while 52.9% were illegal drug users. Of the more extreme illegal drug users (individuals averaging usage of from 6 to 20 times), none scored from 2-4 (the more extreme degrees of self-alienation), while 20.6% scored from 5-6, and 79.3% scored from 7-8.

(TABLE III) Of the individuals indicating extremely high perceived self-alienation (scores of from 2-3), 63.6% were infrequent[4] or nondrinkers, while 36.3% were less infrequent[5] drinkers. Of the individuals indicating moderate self-alienation (scores of from 4-5), 64.9% were infrequent or nondrinkers, while 35.0% were less infrequent drinkers. Of the individuals indicating "less" self-alienation (scores of from 6-7), 51.9% were infrequent or nondrinkers, while 48.0% were less infrequent drinkers. Of the individuals

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[4]Average consumption of "2-3 times a year."

[5]Average consumption of "1-2 times a month" or greater.

indicating the least amount of perceived self-alienation (a score of 8), 56.8% were infrequent or nondrinkers, while 43.1% were less infrequent drinkers.

Of the more frequent legal drug users (those indicating an average usage frequency of at least "1-2 times a week"), 4.0% scored from 2-4 (the more extreme degrees of self-alienation), while 32.6% scored from 5-6, and 62.2% scored from 7-8.

Correlation coefficients between self-alienation and the current usage[6] of specific drugs were determined with the following results (see TABLE IV):

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[6]To have been considered a current illegal drug user, the individual must have exhibited current usage of the specific drug of at least "less than once a month."

TABLE IV

SELF-ALIENATION VERSUS CURRENT ILLEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION

Specific Illegal Drugs	Test Results df	r
LSD	621	-.031
Hashish	621	.135**
Marijuana	621	.104*
Barbiturates	621	.006
Heroin	621	-.011
Amphetamines	621	.069
Cocaine	621	-.003
Mescaline	621	.009
Glue	621	-.105*

** Significant at the .01 level.

* Significant at the .05 level.

The decision reached from the analysis was that perceived self-alienation and the current consumption of marijuana and hashish were negatively correlated. The hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of significance for glue. It was concluded from the analysis that perceived self-alienation and the current consumption of glue were positively correlated.

The following two tables (TABLE V and TABLE VI) provide a comparison of the degrees of perceived self-alienation of current users and nonusers of the nine specific illegal drugs.

In the majority of cases (for six of the nine drugs tested) no significant relationship was found to exist between self-alienation and drug usage.[7] The following significant relationships were found to exist (see TABLE IV and TABLE V) between self-alienation and the current consumption of hashish, marijuana, and glue:

Hashish - A total of 63.5% of all individuals indicating current hashish usage were at the lowest levels of self-alienation (average alienation scores of 7 or 8) compared to 46.7% of the nonusers. Larger percentages of nonusers were found at self-alienation levels 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (differences were slight, running from .04% to 5.4%).

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[7] The results for heroin were inconclusive since there was only one current heroin user in the sample.

TABLE V

PERCEIVED SELF-ALIENATION VERSUS SPECIFIC ILLEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO USAGE [1] BY INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE

Level of Self-alienation[+]		Most 2	3	4	5	6	7	Least 8	Total
Specific Illegal Drugs		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
LSD									
	Users	0	0	1	8	8	12	2	31
	Nonusers	3	8	22	86	173	250	49	591
Hashish									
	Users	0	0	1	14	32	66	16	129
	Nonusers	3	8	22	80	149	196	35	493
Marijuana									
	Users	1	2	9	32	63	116	24	247
	Nonusers	2	6	14	62	118	146	27	375
Barbiturates									
	Users	0	0	2	4	4	12	4	26
	Nonusers	3	8	21	90	177	250	47	596
Heroin									
	Users	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Nonusers	3	8	23	94	180	262	51	621
Amphetamines									
	Users	0	0	1	7	9	25	4	46
	Nonusers	3	8	22	87	172	237	47	576
Cocaine									
	Users	0	0	0	5	2	8	0	15
	Nonusers	3	8	23	89	179	254	51	607
Mescaline									
	Users	0	0	1	5	15	19	1	41
	Nonusers	3	8	22	89	166	243	50	581
Glue									
	Users	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	7
	Nonusers	3	8	22	89	180	262	51	615

[+]The lower the average score, the greater the degree of self-alienation.

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[1]Users were individuals who were currently using the specific illegal drug, with a frequency of at least "less than once a month." Nonusers included both individuals who had "never used," and "used to use" the specific illegal drug.

TABLE VI

PERCEIVED SELF-ALIENATION VERSUS SPECIFIC ILLEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO USAGE[1] BY PERCENTAGE

Level of Self-Alienation [+]	Most ← 2	3	4	5	6	7	→ Least 8	Total
Specific Illegal Drugs	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	n
LSD								
Users	0.0	0.0	3.2	25.8	25.8	38.7	6.4	31
Nonusers	0.5	1.3	3.7	14.5	29.2	42.3	8.2	591
Hashish								
Users	0.0	0.0	0.7	10.8	24.8	51.1	12.4	129
Nonusers	0.6	1.6	4.4	16.2	30.2	39.7	7.0	493
Marijuana								
Users	0.4	0.8	3.6	12.9	25.5	46.9	9.7	247
Nonusers	0.5	1.6	3.7	16.5	31.4	38.9	7.2	375
Barbiturates								
Users	0.0	0.0	7.6	15.3	15.3	46.1	15.3	26
Nonusers	0.5	1.3	3.5	15.1	29.6	41.9	7.8	596
Heroin								
Users	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
Nonusers	0.4	1.2	3.7	15.1	28.9	42.1	8.2	621
Amphetamines								
Users	0.0	0.0	2.1	15.2	19.5	54.3	8.6	46
Nonusers	0.5	1.3	3.8	15.1	29.8	41.1	8.1	576
Cocaine								
Users	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	13.3	53.3	0.0	15
Nonusers	0.4	1.3	3.7	14.6	29.4	41.8	8.4	607
Mescaline								
Users	0.0	0.0	2.4	12.1	36.5	46.3	2.4	41
Nonusers	0.5	1.3	3.7	15.3	28.5	41.8	8.6	581
Glue								
Users	0.0	0.0	14.2	71.4	14.2	0.0	0.0	7
Nonusers	0.4	1.3	3.5	14.4	29.2	42.6	8.2	615

[+]The lower the average score, the greater the degree of self-alienation.

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[1]Users were individuals who were currently using the specific illegal drug with a frequency of at least "less than once a month." Nonusers included both individuals who had "never used," and "used to use" the specific illegal drug.

Marijuana - A total of 56.5% of all the individuals indicating current marijuana usage were at the lowest levels of self-alienation (average alienation scores of 7 or 8) compared to 46.1% of the nonusers. Other differences were slight (running from .01% to 5.9%).

Glue - There were only seven individuals who indicated current usage of glue. With such a small number, the results should be interpreted with care. There were no glue users at the lowest levels of self-alienation (average alienation scores of 7 or 8), while 50.8% of the nonusers had average scores of 7 or 8. All users had average self-alienation scores of from 4 to 6, with most individuals scoring 5 (71.4%).

The following table (TABLE VII) shows, according to average level of self-alienation, the number of individuals indicating at least "every weekend" usage for each of the nine specific illegal drugs.

Very few individuals indicated "every weekend" or greater usage of the given specific drugs, with the exception of marijuana. The sixth and seventh levels of self-alienation held the majority of marijuana users (76.0%. Regarding the other categories, the largest number of hashish users fell into the seventh level of alienation, while all the amphetamine users fell into the seventh level. There were less than five individuals indicating usage for each of the remaining drugs, with usage spread between the 4th and 8th levels of alienation.

TABLE VII

LEVELS OF SELF-ALIENATION FOR AT LEAST "EVERY WEEKEND" SPECIFIC ILLEGAL DRUG USERS

Levels of self-alienation +	Most ←					→ Least		Total
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	n
Specific Illegal Drugs								
LSD	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hashish	0	0	0	2	2	7	3	14
Marijuana	0	0	2	14	30	59	1.	117
Barbiturates	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
Heroin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amphetamines	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Cocaine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mescaline	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Glue	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2

+ The lower the average score, the greater the degree of self-alienation.

In conclusion, self-alienation and both legal and illegal drug consumption were found to be significantly and negatively correlated. Although the correlations were significant, they were not high (.173 and .100).

No significant correlation was found to exist between self-alienation and the current consumption of six of nine specific illegal drugs. Significant negative correlations were found to exist for both hashish and marijuana. The correlations, although significant, were not high (.135 for hashish and .104 for marijuana).

A significant positive correlation was found to exist between the current consumption of glue and self-alienation. The results for glue must be interpreted with care due to the small number of current users (the correlation was -.105).

With the exception of marijuana, very few individuals indicated every weekend or greater specific illegal drug usage. The heavier marijuana users generally exhibited low self-alienation.

It is important to reiterate that the significant correlations were low (none exceed .173) suggesting that generally, no substantial differences existed in the perceived self-alienation of users and nonusers of legal and illegal drugs.

Appendix

1. Self-Alienation Index

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(check (✓) one box for each line.)

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
I don't know what I want to get out of life.				
I often feel left out of things.				
It's not easy for me to have a good time.				
I'm bored a lot of the time.				
I don't feel close to my friends.				
I would like to date or go out with friends more often.				
I don't make friends easily.				
I usually go along with the ideas of my friends.				
My friends don't often ask my opinion on things.				
I am afraid of new experiences.				
I am not able to do things as well as most other people my age.				
At times I think I am no good at all.				

(Continued)

(check (✓) one box for each line.)

	Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot
To get ahead in the world, good luck is more important than hard work.				
Everytime I try to get ahead something or someone stops me.				
People like me don't have much chance to be successful in life.				